Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

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HORSE-BREAKING

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ON

HORSE-BREAKING

BY

ROBERT MORETON, M.R.C.V.S.

LONDON
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1877

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PREFACE.

In these pages it has been my endeavour to point out some of the errors in horse-breaking which have been blindly followed from generation to generation, and to embrace as much matter in a short space as is compatible with clearness of expression.

I hope that this little volume may prove of some service to agriculturists and horse-owners, who often break-in their own colts or cause them to be broken in by their

grooms, and that they may be able to realise larger prices for their horses when properly broken than they otherwise would.

ROBERT MORETON.

21 ONSLOW GARDENS, SOUTH KENSINGTON.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

METHOD OF HALTERING A COLT.

PAGE

That most in vogue—A scene—Driving a colt from pasture—Getting him into the stable—Selection of halter—How to tame lions and tigers—Signs of temper in a colt—How to handle him—Tying him up—An instance of a wild colt 1

CHAPTER II.

LONGEING THE COLT.

Leading in circles, semicircles, and in a straight line—Bits used for mouthing purposes—Mouthing by machinery *versus* mechanical mouthing—Placing the tackling on the colt—Teaching him to pass vehicles, etc.—Shoeing the colt 19

CHAPTER III.

SADDLING THE COLT.

The common martingale—The French martingale—The proper position for the bit in the mouth—Riders with and without hands—Ditto with and without seats—

PAGE

Mounting—The first ride—Remarks on grooms and coachmen—How to pass a heap of stones—When to use whip and spur—Mouthing—Horse-taming—Captain Cuttle's fig-tree 43

CHAPTER IV.

TEACHING THE COLT HIS PACES.

The walk—Ignorance of Englishmen as to the value of the walk—Australian walking horses—The trot—The jig-jog—The flying trot—Ladies' trotters—The canter—Ladies' rocking horses—The gallop—Trainers . . 63

CHAPTER V.

THE ROAD HACK.

His conformation—The ladies' horse—Rotten Row—The covert hack—The hunter—For an open country—For a cramped country—'Made hunters'—Pleasures of a pulling horse—Breaking in a colt to hounds—'Can he leap?'—Natural jumpers—Artificial fences—Lifting horses at their fences—An incident—Water jumps—How to fall well—High-couraged *versus* sluggish horses—Washing horses' legs—Mud fever—Stopping horses' feet—Microscopic experiments—English racers in Australia and India—Paring horses' feet—Colts shedding their teeth—Composition of bone—Two-year-old racing—Prize-fighters—Early maturity and early decay—Famous American trotters: Topgallant, Lady Blanche, Dutchman, Ajax, Flora Temple, Lady Thorn, Goldsmith Maid, Dexter, American girl—Racing now-a-days a money-making business 75

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKING TO HARNESS.

PAGE

Double *versus* single harness—Four wheels *versus* two—Breaking to double harness—Breaking to single harness—Breaking the cart colt to harness—Blinkers—Ladies' eyes 111

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAROUCHE, LANDAU, AND BRÔUGHAM HORSE.

The Victoria, T-cart, light waggonette, or dog-cart horse—The omnibus and van horse—The cart-horse—The Lincolnshire dray-horse—The Suffolk punch—The Clydesdale—Scotch breeders 131

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CHAPTER I.

METHOD OF HALTERING A COLT.

THAT MOST IN VOGUE—A SCENE—DRIVING A COLT FROM PASTURE—GETTING HIM INTO THE STABLE—SELECTION OF HALTER—HOW TO TAME LIONS AND TIGERS—SIGNS OF TEMPER IN A COLT—HOW TO HANDLE HIM—TYING HIM UP—AN INSTANCE OF A WILD COLT.

CHAPTER 1.

METHOD OF HALTERING A COLT.

THE first step towards the breaking-in of a horse is placing a halter upon his head.

There are many methods of doing this in vogue, most of which are by brute force; for instance, a farmer has a colt he wishes to halter, so he gets his men together, and drives the colt into a yard or stable; a man then hangs on to the timid animal by one of his ears and his nose, another man seizes his tail, whilst three or four more men push against either side of the poor frightened beast; then ensues a struggle: the colt, frightened out of his senses and not knowing what is required of him, fights the half-dozen men clinging to him; he rears, kicks, bites, and strikes with his fore feet. The

men on seeing this, and the farmer standing near, say he is a savage brute, and must be reduced by savage means. The colt is then beaten with a broom or pitchfork handle, his tail is twisted, and every means of inflicting excruciating pain is resorted to, which instead of subduing the animal has the reverse effect: the colt, being driven to madness, struggles and fights until he vanquishes his foes. There is then a consultation between the farmer and his men, and at last this ferocious beast is haltered by stratagem, but throughout all his life he is either vicious or extremely nervous and shy, for he will never forget his first introduction to mankind, and the rough usage he then underwent.

I well remember a scene enacted during the above process, and think I cannot do better than recount it here.

The colt to be haltered was driven into an empty stable, and got into one of the stalls: the men then all pressed forward to keep him there, and the above method of haltering was

gone through, but the colt being a game one, kicked a hole through the partition, and knocked some of the men down. After the men had recovered themselves they began again, but with this difference, that two of them got the colt's tail through the hole in the partition, and hung on to it with might and main, they being in security on the opposite side of the partition to that on which the colt was. Thinking it was not my business to interfere with the owner's orders, I stood by and watched this process for an hour and a half, till at last the men being exhausted, and the colt as game as ever, the owner asked my opinion as to how the animal could be haltered, on which I told him that if he would withdraw his men I would halter him myself, which I accordingly did in about a quarter of an hour.

To proceed with the subject of this chapter: the colt or filly (throughout this treatise I shall assume that every animal to be broken-in is a colt, for if I spoke of colts and fillies I should only confuse myself as well as my readers) to

be haltered should be driven into a yard, stable, or loose box as quietly as possible—the best way being to lead an old horse, and endeavour to entice the young one to follow, having one or two men to walk quietly behind to keep him up, for he might otherwise lag behind and then gallop off by himself in an opposite direction. If the men follow up quietly, and at a certain distance (for they must not be too close, or the animal will take fright and gallop away) the colt will, as a rule, follow his leader. The most important point is perfect quietness on the part of the men engaged in this business; they should, however, speak in low soothing tones to the colt, and do anything they may happen to think of to allay the fears of the young animal. The men should keep their arms still; in fact, the best thing they can do is to put their hands in their trouser pockets, *and keep them there.* They must on no account yell and shout, but do all they can to prevent the colt thinking they are following him; in short, they should dissemble as far as possible, and try to imagine

themselves out for a quiet stroll, and that the movements of the colt before them have nothing in the world to do with them. By this means a colt can be driven to the place selected to halter him in with little or no trouble; but let there be any fuss or unusual noise, and the animal will then, through his instinct, guess that something is going to happen to him, and will show you a clean pair of heels.

I will now suppose the colt has been driven into a stable with the old horse, and will also go so far as to suppose that there is a loose box in the stable. Not more than two men should be in the stable now, one of them to hold the old horse, and watch his opportunity of leading him out, and the other to insinuate himself by degrees between the colt and the old horse, and stop the colt rushing out when he finds the horse is leaving him. My reason for now removing the old horse is, that whether in haltering a colt, or during any other process of breaking-in, you should always dispense with anything that is calculated to draw the colt's

gaze from yourself, for *you require his undivided attention*. A child cannot learn his alphabet and play with the animals in his Noah's ark at the same time; much less, therefore, can a colt, being unable to understand what you say to him, learn by your voice, manner, and caresses, what you wish of him, when there is another horse or man near him, whose least movement will attract his attention, if not alarm him, being as he is in a perfectly new position—namely, in close contact with a man, who as yet he is unable to perceive will hurt him or not, but his instinct points to the former.

After the removal of the old horse, and the stable door being closed, one man only should be in the stable with the colt, who will endeavour to get him into the loose box, the door of which should have been previously opened. There should be no noise or bustle outside the stable to distract the colt. The man in the stable must keep quiet, and allow the colt to smell about and inspect everything,

taking advantage from time to time of any of his movements to manœuvre him into the box. The great thing is time; take plenty of time, do not hurry, but watch your opportunities of improving your position. This may be compared to a General commanding an army in action; he stands quietly watching the battle, and gives orders to his men to take up such situations as from time to time he sees will lead to the success of his army.

By degrees the colt gets nearer his loose box, and out of sheer curiosity walks in to inspect it. Now is your time; walk up quickly but quietly and close the door. If you make much noise and fuss about it, the colt will become alarmed and rush out, and then, through your own fault, you will have to go through the whole performance again.

You had better now leave the colt alone for half an hour or so, that he may become accustomed to his new quarters, after which you may endeavour to halter him. Select a halter with a long 'shank' (I prefer one about

eight feet in length, if it is much longer it will be an encumbrance), and tie a knot in it so as to prevent the nose-band pinching the jaws when the colt pulls at the rope on finding he is fast. Enter the loose box and close the door, hang the halter up out of the way of the colt, for it is better to approach him first without it. Avoid all unnecessary movements of the arms, as they will frighten the colt; when you take a step, do it slowly and quietly; if you only take one step in a minute, it will repay you: be deliberate, quiet, and gentle in every movement. The colt will now be watching you, not being able to understand what is going to happen. Speak to him soothingly, and approach gently and slowly. Watch him, do not stare in his eyes with a ferocious look, as some people do, under the impression that by so doing they can subdue the wildest animal. I have been told it will tame a lion or tiger, but I know it will *not* subdue a horse, for I have *tried* it. Do not fix your eye on any one spot on his body, but keep moving them from

his eyes to his ears, from his tail to his legs, in fact keep them running all over his body, for a man who knows a horse will understand by any one or combined movements of the above parts what sort of temper the colt is in, and also in what form he may expect an attack. For instance, if the colt shake his tail impatiently, and move one of his hind legs, you may look out for a kicker; if he arch his neck, lay his ears back, and take short snaps with his mouth, you must take care he does not bite you; if he paw viciously with his forefeet, he probably will strike you if he can. I do not lay these rules down as facts which are invincible, but that they generally show in which direction the temper of the colt will be manifested, and thus the breaker-in can avoid being bitten, kicked, or struck if he keep his eyes open. As a rule, however, the man should imagine that every colt has *each and every one of these tricks*, and thus be prepared for any or all that may present themselves.

I cannot lay down any rule as to what

point on the body the hand should first touch; the best place undoubtedly is the shoulder, but you must use your own judgment after having watched the animal as to what part of his body is most accessible. Some colts will allow you to touch their heads directly, whilst others—and I think they are the most numerous—present their tails to you. Anyhow, in whichever part they seem most inclined to allow your first caresses, you must make it your *rule* to, by degrees, manipulate *towards the head*; which, after you have *once* been permitted to handle freely, you may consider the battle as won: for are not the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, and sensation (I have no doubt that the sense of taste has also something to do with the matter) fully developed in the head? Thus, I make a point of advising my readers *always* to make an effort to handle the head, as by a more intimate and scrutinising inspection of your hand and body the colt is better enabled to arrive at a fair understanding with you.

Now that the colt has allowed you to

handle him to a certain extent, and has found you are not going to hurt him, you may leave his side (quietly and slowly as when you approached him) and get the halter you previously hung up; but avoid all hurry, jerking of the arms, &c. Hold the halter in the left hand with the 'shank' coiled up, the end of which you must grasp with the right hand. Approach the colt gently as before, speaking soothingly to him; place your right hand on any part of his body which is easiest got at, and work your way gently up to the neck; spend some time here handling him with your right hand containing the 'shank' end (I am here supposing the man to be on the near side of the animal, where he ought always to endeavour to be). Having reached the mane, pay the rope out slowly between your fingers, so that it will fall on the off side of the neck; when about eighteen inches to a couple of feet have been worked out through your fingers, you will see the end of the rope hanging down under the neck on the off side. You must now keep handling the

neck downwards until your hand is close to the rope's end, when you must catch it quietly and tie it on the near side so as to form a noose round the animal's neck. You can do all this easily with your one hand as it is all finger work, but if you have your left hand to help you there would in all probability be a good deal of elbow movement which would frighten the colt, make him move, and most likely all your manipulation would have to be gone through again.

Although as yet the halter is not on the colt's head, it is virtually there; for now that you have a rope round his neck you have him to a certain extent in your power, and the rest is comparatively easy. The next move is to endeavour to place the halter on his head with your left hand, whilst you hold the rope in your right, thus have partial control over the animal. When the halter is near his nose he will 'bob' his head, move away, and feeling the constraint of the rope round his neck for the first time, will struggle and endeavour to

drag you to the other side of the box; but he will soon give in, and then you can easily place the halter on his head, after which untie the 'shank' round his neck, and all is finished.

You must now handle him, pet him, talk to him, and make much of him, but do not pull at the halter so as to make him fight. In half-an-hour or so you can slip a leather head-stall over the halter, and remove the latter. Some people may say: 'Why do you not put the head-stall on first instead of taking all this time and bother to put a halter on?' My answer is this: the halter is easiest put on, for the throat strap in the head-stall, unlike that of the bridle, is a fixture, and in placing it on the head this throat strap scrapes along the skin from the chin to the angle of the jaw, causing the colt uneasiness; and another drawback is, that in buckling on the head-stall the colt takes fright, jerks his head, and down drops the head-stall at your feet: but if you put it on over the halter the colt has by this time got used to seeing and feeling your hand about his head, and

also you can steady his head with the halter. Again, I think I hear the question: 'Why do you take so much time and trouble to tie the halter shank round the colt's neck when you might throw a lasso over his head in a second?' My answer to this is, that I do not wish to frighten the colt, but by gentleness and kindness to make him repose confidence in me.

If you can spare time, after placing the head-stall on the colt's head you may handle him for a time, then place water and food within his reach, and leave him to himself for the rest of the day to get accustomed to his new headdress.

On the following day you can handle him quietly in the loose box and offer him choice locks of hay or corn out of your hand to increase his intimacy with you, and then you may tie a rope to the head-stall and fasten him up. He is sure to struggle when he finds himself tied up, therefore you must not leave him; for if you have done your work properly he will have already recognised you as a friend

and not a foe, and will, when he hears you speaking to him soothingly and encouragingly, become quieter by degrees, and will soon cease to resist. Stay with him for half-an-hour and pet him, then release him, take off the rope from the head-stall, and leave him to himself. The day following you can repeat the above, and afterwards let him out in a yard or paddock by himself for exercise; do not stay with him, but let him amuse himself as he likes.

He has learnt his lessons very well so far, and will be all the more fit for future instruction if he is allowed a little recreation. There is no greater mistake than tying up a colt for half a day at a time; it makes him disgusted with his lessons and also tends to make him hate the sight of his instructor, which should always be guarded against. The wildest colt I ever saw when first handled, was after a fortnight's handling so fond of his breaker-in that he would follow him about wherever he went in an open field, without having any allurements held out to him in the shape of corn &c.

CHAPTER II.

LONGEING THE COLT.

LEADING IN CIRCLES, SEMICIRCLES, AND IN A STRAIGHT LINE —BITS USED FOR MOUTHING PURPOSES—MOUTHING BY MACHINERY *VERSUS* MECHANICAL MOUTHING—PLACING THE TACKLING ON THE COLT—TEACHING HIM TO PASS VEHICLES ETC.—SHOEING THE COLT.

CHAPTER II.

LONGEING THE COLT.

The colt may now be 'longed' and taught to lead.

Having procured a long cavasson of webbing with a spring swivel at one end, fasten it to the headstall, open the door of the loose box and allow the colt to walk out, following him up quietly and regulating your pace to his, so that he will not feel himself in bondage until he is outside the stable, otherwise he would, on finding he was not free, commence to struggle, and might possibly injure himself by running against the stall posts or slipping upon the stone floor. Once outside the stable endeavour to get the colt to the place selected for longeing, which should be as near as possible. Do not pull at him, but try to get him there by cunningness, that is to say, by taking advantage of his move-

ments and manœuvring as much as possible to make him go there of his own accord. Avoid pulling at him until you arrive at the longing ground, for he is sure to resist and fight, and it is best that this should not take place before you get to the cleared space required for his longing, otherwise obstacles such as trees, gate-posts, &c., will interfere very much in your command over him and might also injure him. If he should struggle before you have got him into a clear space, use all your strength to hold him, but keep as quiet as possible, or he will become so terrified at your struggles as to fight all the more, and it will become a pitched battle between the colt at one end of the cavasson and yourself at the other for mastery. Speak to him quietly, but at the same time keep up a firm steady pull at him, when, as he has already become accustomed to being tied up, he will soon give in and leave off struggling. You must now slacken the cavasson a little, and decrease the distance between you by taking a few steps quietly towards him, then

stand still and talk to him, when he will soon recover himself and walk off again, of course in the direction required, for you will have placed him between you and the longeing ground, thus he will walk away *from* you to it. Having arrived at last at the spot selected, take the initiative by planting your feet firmly and and taking a pull at the colt, thus giving him his first real lesson in submission. He of course will be astonished at your temerity and struggle, but will soon give in, when you must try to induce him quietly to walk, trot, or canter as he likes in a circle round you, the length of the cavasson being the radius of the circle. It is as well to have a whip with you, but do not use it or even crack it until every other means have been tried to induce the colt to do as you wish. As a rule he will give no trouble, but will run round you at the length of his halter, pulling more or less strongly upon the cavasson. Keep him at it for a time, and then gradually shorten the cavasson and stop him, pat him, speak kindly to him, and make much of him, giving

him a handful of corn or anything he may be accustomed to eat. After having rested him you may start him again but in the *opposite* direction, so as not to tire his legs or make him disgusted with his work. He will soon leave off pulling against you, and when he becomes a little tired he will get used to your word of command and will be glad to stop when told to do so, when you should always approach and make much of him. It is of the utmost importance from the very beginning to familiarise the colt with certain words to indicate what you require of him. As soon as he has learnt to start on his circular trip and continue it without much fuss, you must leave off and take him back to his loose box, and on no account keep him at his work until he is really tired, or he will soon become disgusted with it and will not exert himself on future occasions, or he may turn sulky, which is worse. After placing him in his box again, leave him to himself with food and water within his reach. In the afternoon you may give him another lesson of from three-

quarters to an hour in length, according to circumstances. On the following day you can teach him to lead.

Take the colt on to the longeing ground and make him circle round you; after a time, when the animal has sobered down a little, you can take in the cavasson by degrees while you walk round in small circles to the colt's larger radius; keep on decreasing the distance between yourself and the colt until you are within a few feet of him, and then continue walking round with him as before for a few turns, when you can take in all the remaining length of cavasson and walk on as before, but with this difference, that at first you stood still, being in fact a fixed point representing the centre of the circle, then you described small circles to his larger ones, whilst now you are walking side by side with him. Talk to him and pat him, but be very gentle for fear he should take fright and pull away from you. After the colt has become accustomed to this and has gone round quietly a few times with you, you may by pushing

against him, gradually cause him imperceptibly to move in another circle, that is, with him nearest the centre, whilst before he had been farthest from that point, and so you change his legs and prevent him from tiring.

Keep changing the direction of the circle from time to time, and when you think he has learnt how to lead in a circle, or that he is getting tired, you can lead him back to his box by *circles*. Do not attempt as yet to induce him to to be led in a straight line, for if you do he is almost sure to fight; he cannot be made to understand everything at once. So far he has been taught to lead in a circle by stratagem, and by stratagem he will also be taught to lead in a straight line, but this must take place by degrees, being postponed to a future day.

Leave him in his loose box until the afternoon, when you can longe him again, and then by degrees shorten the cavasson as before and lead him in circles as in the morning, but do not keep him out more than an hour, after which take him back again in circles. On the

next day you may teach the colt to lead straight. Take him on to the longeing ground and run him round a few times until he has got rid of his exuberant spirits, then do as before and lead him round in circles, changing the direction of the circles from time to time, by degrees enlarging them; then, instead of leading him round an entire circle, make semicircles, that is to say, a half circle one way and then a half circle in the opposite direction, and so on, so that the *centres* of these semicircles will be in a straight line. Thus by degrees you can diminish the *short* diameters of these semicircles, at the same time increasing their *long* diameters in length, so as to form semi-ovals, and by continuing to lengthen them you will in time have imperceptibly gained a *straight* line. When you have to turn him do so in a sweeping curve, and gradually get him into the straight line again. Keep him at this some time, for this walking exercise will not tire him, and he will get used to you and to his work. In the afternoon you can repeat the lesson, and also on the

day or two following, until he leads well. On the second day of leading him in a straight line you should carry a whip, to teach him always to walk with his shoulder opposite yours; his head should always be in front of you, and your body should be level with his fore-arm and shoulder, otherwise if you allow his head to be level with you he will by degrees hang back, and you will teach him to drag on you, and for ever afterwards when being led you will have to *pull* him along. To prevent this fault you must lead him with the cavasson in your right hand, and with your left hand containing the whip, whenever his shoulder drops behind yours, you must strike him gently *behind* you, when he will come into his proper position immediately. By doing this and watching him carefully, you will in a few days teach him to lead well, keep his shoulder always level with yours, and not hang back, and thus prevent him in after days from being *pulled* along, and save him much ill-usage and beating. In two or three days he will lead well, and then you may put

the tackling on him, which will consist of a roller, a crupper, and a bit. The roller is nothing more than a surcingle having that part which corresponds to the saddle well padded, having on each side of it on a level with the sides of the withers a buckle for the reins, and behind, in the centre line, a D for the crupper, which should near the tail have a buckle on the near side of it, or it may be as well to have one on either side. The buckle greatly facilitates placing the crupper under the tail, as it can be put round its root easily, instead of having to be drawn over its whole length from the tip to the root, hair and all.

As to the best bit, everyone has his particular fancy in this respect. Some advocate a large smooth snaffle, with keys depending from its central ring; others a large smooth straight bit; others a straight bit with rollers on its mouthpiece; others a large straight bit the mouthpiece of which is of wood; others a circular bit consisting of a smooth ring with a loop on its upper surface at either side for its attachment

to the bridle, whilst others again believe in a bit having a smooth semicircular mouthpiece. I will now mention these bits in their reverse order. The semicircular bit being only a modification of the circular, I may treat the two as one. Allowing, as they do, no relief to the gums and mouth, through their continued pressure on them, they are not qualified to give a colt a good mouth, but at the same time they are most admirable bits for the use of grooms leading horses out for exercise, or even for the horses they ride during exercise, as they are least calculated to spoil a mouth of any bits with which I am acquainted, and as it is a notorious fact that almost every groom (and a good many gentlemen too) hangs on by the bit instead of by the muscular power of his legs, of course the bit which is least severe on a horse's mouth, and calculated to do least damage to it, is the best. Therefore I can confidently recommend both these bits for exercise work, watering bridles, and in fact for any stable work.

The straight bit having a wooden mouth-piece I also object to, for by being softened with the saliva in the mouth, it is easily torn and roughened during the process of 'champing,' (for every colt will play with his bit as a rule,) and whenever it comes in contact with his teeth a wooden bit is more or less lacerated, thus presenting a roughened surface, which is anything but conducive to the formation of a good mouth.

The next on the list is a straight bit with smooth rollers or rings on its mouth-piece, which are for the purpose of preventing the colt from sliding his mouth from one side of the bit to the other. This may be all very well in theory, but here prevention is *not* better than cure, for the colt will so injure his lips and gums as to make him either hard-mouthed or extremely sensitive, so much so in fact that the least pull on his mouth will make him throw up his head instantly, and thus not being able to see where he is going to is the cause of many an accident. This is the bit which brings

martingales so much into use, from its having been used during the so-called mouthing of the colt.

The next bit under consideration is the large, smooth, straight one, with keys hanging from its centre. So far I have condemned all the bits I have mentioned, but this one will not allow of a mere mention and then a dismissal, it having its strong points, and in my opinion, its weak ones also. Its advocates say it prevents the colt from being mouthed irregularly, or in other words that the colt cannot relieve the pressure on its mouth by alternately leaning on either side of the bit. This, I must say, is not reasonable, for if the animal only arches his neck a little more, and turns his head to the right when he is tied with the reins to the roller, the pressure of the bit will be on the *left* side, thus relieving the right side, and *vice versâ*. Again, these bits seldom fit the colt's mouth, and consequently they either pinch and hurt the mouth, or are much too wide, which is generally the case, thus teaching the animal to

slide his mouth on it from side to side, for which trick the straight mouth-piece with rings has been invented for its eradication. When I say that the colt can, by keeping his tongue more or less elevated in his mouth, prevent all pressure of this bit on his gums and lips, I think I may pass it over as incompetent for the object in view, namely a good mouth.

The next, and last bit to be considered is the large smooth snaffle, with keys depending from its central ring.

I consider this to be the best bit as yet invented for mouthing a colt. No movement of the tongue can raise it from the gums or lips, the colt can play with it with ease, and seems to enjoy it, instead of continually fighting with it more or less, as he does with the others already mentioned, with the exception of the circular or semicircular bits. Some people may say it causes an unequal mouth, but I maintain that it does not, for if, as already described, the animal arches his neck and turns his head to the right, undoubtedly the *pressure*

of the bit will be on the left side, but the *weight* of the right half of the bit will still be on the right side of the mouth, which cannot be the case with a straight mouth-piece. Again, it is not of so much consequence as to whether this sort of bit fits the colt's mouth or not, provided it is placed in the proper place in the mouth, as the weights of each half depending from their centres will keep the pressure on both sides equal. The great mistake made in mouthing a colt is that the animal is tied up too long with the bit in his mouth, for when muscular contraction is exhausted he is forced through sheer fatigue to *lean upon the bit*, and thus lay the stepping stone to a hard mouth.

Men think now-a-days they can mouth a colt by machinery. They tie his head up and down in the most intricate manner, put a great bit in his mouth, and if the bit is not considered heavy enough, a bag of shot is tied to each side of it. The animal is then forced to stand in a stall with his head tightly buckled up to the roller, and there he is made to stand, fastened

to the pillar reins, in a fixed position for hours at a time. No wonder that half the horses in England have mouths like cast-iron. Colts cannot be mouthed by machinery, but only by proper handling in the saddle. It is of no use going through all the elaborate process now in vogue of *stable* mouthing, india-rubber dumb jockeys, reins, &c. It is the man's *hands* only which can do so, but at the same time I must confess it is a difficult thing to find a man with good and light hands. Perhaps this system of mechanical mouthing may have had something to do with hardening men's hands as well as horses' mouths.

I may now describe the proper position for the bit in the mouth. It should not be drawn up tightly into the angle of the lips, neither should it be so slack as to be among the incisor teeth, but it should be exactly opposite the *groove* in the chin where the curb-chain ought to be when used. I think I need not tell my readers how to put the roller on the colt; the only things required are to take time,

be as gentle as possible, and take care not to buckle it on tight at first, but leave it loose for the first two or three days. To put the crupper on, all that is required is to unbuckle it on the near side, elevate the tail, place it in its proper position, and then buckle it up again. There will be no trouble in placing the roller or crupper on the colt if he has been previously treated as advocated by me, for by this time he will have become tolerably quiet through having been gently handled daily. Most people fasten the bit to the head-stall, which I object to; for when you lead or longe the colt the cavasson is attached to the nose-band either before, behind, or on either side of it, which necessarily must displace the bit more or less; therefore I much prefer a bridle with the bit attached to be placed under the head-stall, when there will be no fear of displacing the bit. Do not fasten reins to the bit for the first day or two, but lead the colt out without them, for he will have enough to do to get used to the constraint of bit, roller, and crupper. When

you have placed the tackling on the young animal, you may let him stand in the loose box for half-an-hour to familiarise himself with the objects on his body, when he can be taken to the longing ground, and run round for a time in different directions, after which lead him about for an hour or two. In the afternoon you can longe him a little, and then lead him out of the field and take him along a road or lane to accustom him to see and pass strange objects. The road selected for his first lesson should be the quietest that can be found near the longing ground. When he is startled at a heap of stones, a log of wood, or any other object, he must be spoken to quietly and patted, but above all allow him plenty of time to examine minutely the object which has frightened him, when, after a time, he will approach it, smell it, and touch it with his nose, thus allaying all his fears; he may then be led backwards and forwards past the place a few times, and proceed on his journey. For the day following you will have to longe him, and then lead him

along the road both morning and afternoon. Always commence the day's work by longeing, so as to take some of the 'gas' out of the colt and sober him down a little before he begins his daily lessons, otherwise he will be so full of play as to pay no attention to your teaching. On the third day you may attach reins to the bit and buckle them to the roller, but be sure you leave them very slack; you may also lead him about in more frequented roads, and if he has been tolerably quiet so far, you can take him through a village or town, and thus accustom him to objects in a new sphere of life. For a fortnight after the first tackling took place, your work will be to lead him about roads, towns, and even take him to railway stations to get accustomed to the trains. Take the reins up a hole every other day until his head is carried perpendicularly, but then stop, do not take them up the eighth of an inch more. At the expiration of the fortnight you must longe him with the cavasson attached alternately to either side of the bit, so as to

teach the animal side pressure, for so far he has only been undergoing direct pressure. It is as well to count how many circles he goes on one side of the bit, and then give him a corresponding number on the other to prevent his mouth becoming one-sided or, in other words, having one side of his mouth *more* or *less* sensitive than the other. Do not keep him at this long, or his mouth will become very tender and sore, but occupy the remainder of the time in leading about the roads &c. Continue doing this for two or three days, and then, having procured long reins, drive him about on the longing ground or in a field, turning him from time to time from one side to the other, stopping him every now and then to get him accustomed to his work, and if you do not pull at him too much, but allow him plenty of play with his head, he will in two or three days have a very fair mouth. After the first day of using reins you may drive him about the roads instead of leading him.

Of course, during all this time—in fact,

from the haltering of the colt—you will have been freely handling him daily, lifting first his fore-feet and striking them with your hand, at first gently, to get him used to the hammer, and afterwards, when this has been accomplished with facility, the same has been done to the hind ones; and after the colt has been taught to drive in reins, it is time he was shod preparatory to mounting him.

In mouthing a colt he should never be placed in a stall and fastened to the pillar reins, as is too often the practice now-a-days, for it only teaches him to lean upon the bit and slide his mouth from one side of it to the other, thus teaching him a habit to counteract which the ringed mouthpiece has been invented. A day should be fixed for shoeing the colt, and an arrangement made with the blacksmith to shoe him at a certain hour; for if this is neglected, the animal may have to wait his turn whilst three or four other horses are undergoing the process. Before taking him to the blacksmith's shop at the hour appointed, the colt

must be well longed so as to get him sobered down a little; and if he is a very nervous fidgety animal, he should be longed until he is really tired. If on arriving at the shop the blacksmith is not quite ready for him, do not tie him up, but lead him up and down until he is wanted; and then, during the process of shoeing, stand by him and do all you can to soothe and allay his fears, at the same time taking care that the smith performs his work as quietly as possible. If he is very refractory, get his fore-feet shod and leave the hind ones for the following day.

After the colt has been shod and has been driven about the roads in reins for a few days to get him used to going in shoes, he may be got ready for mounting, but that will require a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER III.

SADDLING THE COLT.

THE COMMON MARTINGALE—THE FRENCH MARTINGALE—THE PROPER POSITION FOR THE BIT IN THE MOUTH—RIDERS WITH AND WITHOUT HANDS—DITTO WITH AND WITHOUT SEATS—MOUNTING—THE FIRST RIDE—REMARKS ON GROOMS AND COACHMEN—HOW TO PASS A HEAP OF STONES—WHEN TO USE WHIP AND SPUR—MOUTHING — HORSE-TAMING — CAPTAIN CUTTLE'S FIG-TREE.

CHAPTER III.

SADDLING THE COLT.

The colt must now be saddled. Allow him first to look at, smell, and feel the saddle, then place it gently on his back, draw the girths up, at first very slackly, put on the crupper with the buckle as before, and a breastplate. I object to a martingale, my reason for which I shall mention further on. At first do not put on any stirrup-straps or stirrups, as they will only act as alarmants to the colt. After petting him for a time in the loose box, tighten the girths moderately, and lead him out for a time, and then longe him to accustom him to the flapping of the saddle; after which drive him about the roads with the saddle on. Repeat this in the afternoon.

On the following day do as before, but attach stirrup-irons and straps to the saddle; you may also fasten a strap on either side of the flank to the crupper, so as to get the animal used to having objects touching and dangling from him. Repeat this in the afternoon, and also on the following day, when the colt will be ready for mounting.

Before mounting, longe the colt well with the saddle on, then take him back to his loose box, and put on a French, or as some people call it, a Dutch martingale, consisting simply of a couple of rings joined together, through which the reins pass. To make this clearer for such of my readers who may not have seen one, I will describe how this is done. Unfasten the buckle in the centre of the reins, and pass each rein through a different ring, then buckle the reins together again over the withers, the rings or French martingale will then be between the colt's chin and his breast. I much prefer this French martingale to the one in ordinary use, which has two straps with rings at their

extremities buckled on to the breastplate, through which the reins pass, for with the former you are able to steady the colt's head without constraining it, which is the worst thing you can do when first riding a young animal; while the latter fixes the head too much in one position, and also tends to make him carry it far too low, when all attempts to mouth him are useless, for the bit will then be in the *angle of the lips*, the very place where it ought not to be.

There is also a danger should the colt fight much, especially with his fore-feet, of their becoming entangled in the martingale or reins. Men put the common martingale on when riding a young colt, for the simple reason that it gives them a good purchase, and thus enables them to hold on; a man who requires this aid to keep him in the saddle should never attempt to break-in a colt, that is, if he wishes him to have a good mouth, or one only a little removed from cast-iron. If a man can sit a colt without any pressure on the reins, he will

probably be able to mouth the animal well, provided he has certain other qualities, such as patience, knack, &c., for a man who can retain his seat without the aid of the reins has, as a general rule, light hands; while on the contrary, the man who relies upon the reins to secure him his seat in the saddle, has neither hands nor seat, and the sooner he contents himself with riding the horse nature gave him —to wit, his own legs—the better, for he will only spoil every horse he crosses, provided they have not been already spoilt by some other bad rider.

To return to the subject. After having put on the ring martingale, see that everything is right about the colt. Look to the girths, that they may not be slack, see that the crupper is neither too tight or too loose, and that no hairs have gathered under it, and satisfy yourself that everything is as it ought to be, even to the buckles of the bridle. Then gathering up the reins in your left hand, and standing with your left side to his shoulder, place your

left foot in the stirrup, and gradually bear weight upon it, when after a while you may raise yourself in the stirrup, so that both your legs are off the ground. You must watch minutely every movement of the animal, and speak gently and soothingly to him. After standing in the stirrup for a few seconds, lower yourself to the ground again, and then repeat the same a few times, until the colt seems quiet and used to it, when you may throw your right leg gently over his back, taking care not to touch him with it, and placing all your weight on your right hand, grasping the pommel of the saddle. When your leg is over his back, lower it quietly into its proper position, but keep it from touching the animal's side until you have gently seated yourself in the saddle, then put your foot in the stirrup and there you are. Now do not spoil everything by trying to make the colt progress, but sit still, talk to him, pat him, and do everything you can to pacify the animal, and get him used to seeing you take such liberties with him as sitting on

his back; for, mind you, he feels an insult as much as you do. If a stranger were to jump on your back, you would immediately resent it by trying to get him off, and by fighting him; but if a friend were to do the same thing you would laugh, and if you did not exactly enjoy the joke, at any rate you would not resent it. The same with the colt. If you get on his back and urge him forward, he thinks you are taking a liberty, and as such are an enemy, and therefore tries his best to get rid of you; but on the other hand, if you sit still and speak kindly to him, he will recognise your action as that of a friend, although he may not actually laugh. After having sat on him a few minutes, you may get off, but very quietly, so as not to frighten him. Release your right foot from the stirrup, keep the leg from the animal's side, and raise it to a level with his back, then gradually lower it on the near side until you are standing in the near stirrup. Pause here a few seconds, make much of him, and then lower yourself to the ground, take your left foot out

of the stirrup, and then handle and fondle the colt. Repeat this a few times, and then lead him out to the longing ground, as that most familiar to him, and where he has learnt his several acts of subordination, which latter is not the least beneficial aid, for he will recognise it as the scene of such to you. You must now mount him in the same quiet manner as before, but sit still, talk to him, and above all do not urge him forward, for if you do he will generally fight, plunge, rear, buck or kick, and then unless you are a good rider he will send you sprawling on mother earth. A fight at this juncture should always be avoided, for if he throws you he will know he is the conqueror, and will most likely be a kicker, a rearer, &c., for some time to come, if not for life; but, on the other hand, if you get the better of him it may so cow him that it will be a long time before he gets out of the sulks, or he may be a 'slug' and mean-spirited horse for the remainder of his days. Therefore avoid making him worse, for if you only give him

time he will most likely walk off of his own accord, and if on the longing ground will probably walk or jig-jog round the circular track through sheer custom, or he may take a path of his own, but whether he chooses the circular path or one of his own, do not check him, but allow him to go where he likes for a time, of course gradually sheering him off with the reins until he goes where *you* like. Do not pull at him, let him have all the reins you can, your only control being gradual guidance from side to side. Never mind his taking large corners, you are not mouthing him as yet, but getting him used to carry you, and by degrees cajoling him into going where you require him. You must not force him, or there will be an open fight, which is to be avoided for the first few days after first mounting, but little by little cause him to go in your direction, but so imperceptibly as to make him believe it is of his own free will he is going there.

It has been my theory from the commencement of this little treatise so to work as to

cajole and manœuvre the colt into following your wishes, that they are so imperceptibly gained that he does not notice them as acts of actual obedience, for they have come upon him in so gradual a manner that there having been no fight over the matter he imagines the actions to have been of his own free will. Of course there must be an open rupture sooner or later which will undeceive him, but this should be avoided with all possible care until he has been mounted a week if possible. Ride the animal about the field for an hour or an hour and a half quietly, not going out of a walk or jig-jog, and then take him back to his loose box, and repeat the same in the afternoon, your object at present being to get him used to your weight on his back, and to gradual guidance; you are not trying to mouth him, or attempting to teach him his paces. 'Little by little,' and 'Perseverando,' are my mottoes, and ought to be those of every man who undertakes to break-in a colt. It is very much like bringing up a child; you cannot give a child an adult's

thoughts at one lesson, or teach him right from wrong, but must continue it over a long course of years; and if you correct a child harshly, or beat him without showing where his fault lies and reasoning with him, he will either show fight as best he can—for he does not *understand* what he has done wrong or *why* it is wrong—or else he turns sulky and broods over his wrongs, which latter I hold to be worse than the former; and this holds good in the horse, for a sulky colt is much harder to overcome and requires much more patience than one which breaks out in open fight, for when the fight is over it is over, but with a sulky one there is no knowing how long it may last. As it is best to reason with a child, and prove to him that he is wrong, instead of whipping him, so is it best to teach a horse by degrees what is required of him, for he cannot be reasoned with, but must learn step by step the lessons given him. If you endeavour to teach him too much at once, or in too rapid strides, he *cannot understand*, and therefore when you

punish or reprimand him he turns sulky, or shows fight, and very naturally too, for he does not know why he has been punished after doing his best to please you.

Ride the colt for the three following days (morning and afternoon) about the field so as to avoid a fight with him caused by passing carriages, carts, or any other objects which might alarm him, and by so doing he will gradually become accustomed to the guidance of the reins and understand the pressure of the heels and other little signs, imparting to him the pace and direction in which he is to move, after which he can be ridden on the road. It is best to select a good wide road, and to avoid all narrow ones and lanes for a time, until he is handy at passing vehicles &c., for if you meet a cart in a lane there is very little room for him to pass it by, and as he is almost sure to dance about a little there is always some danger of his hurting himself against the wheel or some projecting part of the cart; but on the other hand, if the road be wide there is no such

danger, and he will also be got past any object which may frighten him much easier, and the chances of having a fight with him are thus reduced to a minimum. Always avoid a fight if possible by every means in your power, for instance, if a carriage is coming very fast towards you, either from behind or in front, and you think it calculated to frighten your pupil very much, you can by raising your hand show the coachman that you wish him to drive quietly until he has passed you, and you will find that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he is civil enough to comply with your mute request, but the hundredth deserves—— Well, perhaps the less said about his deserts the better, for I suppose it is impossible to find a flock of human beings without one black sheep amongst them, above all amongst grooms and coachmen, who as a class are the most ignorant and bigoted men on the face of the earth; there are, however, some few trustworthy excellent men among them, but they are very few and far between.

If on nearing a heap of stones or any other object, such as a woman's petticoat or other garments drying on a hedge, at which the colt seems inclined to be frightened, do not flog him past but speak kindly to him and pat him, do not hurry, but let the animal take his own time, and you will find by degrees that he will take a step or two towards it, and at last get close to and possibly touch it with his nose after having smelt it; then you must ride him backwards and forwards past it a few times, and when he has ceased to notice it continue on your way. You will of course have a fight some time or other, for the colt may wish at some cross roads to choose one for himself, irrespective of any choice on your part, or he may wish to follow some horse on the road before him, and refuse to leave an animal feeding by the roadside, but in whichever mode he disputes your authority you must undeceive him, and that *thoroughly and at once.* If he requires whip and spur, let him have them, but remember, never allow him to get the upper

hand of you, for if so, you may just as well turn him out and leave off breaking, until you have found a man who *can* master him, for he will have found out his own strength and will not forget it in a hurry. If it takes you half a day or even a whole one to make him do as you wish, it will be time well spent.

After having ridden him for a fortnight, you may discontinue the mouthing bit, and in its stead use an ordinary plain snaffle, taking care to select as large a one as possible, for if it is too fine it will hurt the animal's mouth, and either render it dull or extremely sensitive.

If a colt is well broken at first there will be no necessity in after life to resort to such means as those which Rarey introduced, or the dodging process of M. Carriès as mentioned in the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' the paragraph concerning which I here reproduce:—

'Horse Taming.—History repeats itself in horse-taming, it appears, as well as in other matters. Mr. Rarey and Cruiser have met with their match in M. Carriès and Trocadéro. Tro-

cadéro, son of Monarque and Antonio, has of late exhibited symptoms of the most fearful ferocity; and "about two months ago," according to "Le Sport," M. Aumont "met M. Carriès," who offered to tame the animal. M. Aumont, having inquired whether the means employed would not be drugs or such violence as might injure the horse or render him still more furious, and having received an assurance that nothing of the kind would be used, he consented; and, at a time agreed upon, a visit was paid to the stud at Victat-Pontfol, and the experiments began. The first thing was to enter the horse-box. This M. Carriès did, in presence of M. Aumont and all the "stable," who "s'attendait à le voir dévoré." An exciting "duel" ensued; the horse rushing, time after time, with open mouth and with "hennissements féroces," at M. Carriès, who merely dodged him by rapid movements aside, as the toreador dodges the bull. After ten of these attacks so met, "the animal suddenly stopped to contemplate the audacious individual who braved

him in this manner, and was at once seized with the nervous trembling which comes over 'le lutteur aux prises avec un adversaire contre lequel ses moyens habituels ont échoué. Trocadéro était dompté!'" And M. Carriès took advantage of the horse's stupor to put a saddle and bridle upon him, after which Trocadéro submitted like a lamb to have his fore-feet shod, and ultimately his hind-feet, without more ado. The dodging process of M. Carriès certainly beats for simplicity even the throwing-down process of Mr. Rarey; but it might be awkward if the tamer were to meet with a horse less susceptible of "stupeur" than Trocadéro appears to be. The question suggested by all these horse-taming feats, however, is whether they could not be rendered altogether unnecessary by care taken in the original training, and whether, as regards the trainer and the method he adopts towards his four-legged pupils, the gist of the whole matter does not lie in what has been said by a French authority:—"S'il est brutal, le poulain deviendra farouche, violent, et méfiant; si,

au contraire, il sait mettre l'animal en confiance, la bonne entente s'établira promptement." It certainly seems that, if a horse in his years of discretion, or rather maturity, and of confirmed viciousness, can be tamed so readily by a resolute but gentle master, there ought to be little or no difficulty in training him up during foalhood, like Captain Cuttle's fig-tree, in the way he should go, so that when he is old he would not depart from it.'

CHAPTER IV.

TEACHING THE COLT HIS PACES.

THE WALK—IGNORANCE OF ENGLISHMEN AS TO THE VALUE OF THE WALK—AUSTRALIAN WALKING HORSES—THE TROT—THE JIG-JOG—THE FLYING TROT—LADIES' TROTTERS—THE CANTER—LADIES' ROCKING HORSES—THE GALLOP—TRAINERS.

CHAPTER IV.

TEACHING THE COLT HIS PACES.

Now that the colt has been mounted and more or less mouthed during his fortnight's road work, he must be taught his paces, viz., how to walk, trot, canter, and gallop properly. Ambling, pacing, and running not being in vogue in this country, I shall make no mention of them.

THE WALK.—It is of great importance to teach a horse to walk well; there is nothing more disagreeable than riding a horse that walks as if he was crawling to his own funeral, or one which will not walk, but prefers to shake the life out of you with a jig-jog. People in this country do not place so much value on the walk as they would if they had long journeys to go. The Australians, on the contrary,

who live in the saddle, appreciate a good walking horse, and will give a good deal more for a walker than they will for one that is not. An Australian may be travelling a long distance, or in search of lost sheep, cattle, or horses; in either case the pace would be slow, and probably the distance covered daily from forty to forty-five miles, or perhaps more, and to ride a horse day after day for this distance, which will not walk, but only jig-jog, is simply martyrdom. Therefore those men who break in horses for their own use take very great pains to teach them to walk well. In England the average pace of a horse which has any pretensions to walking is about four miles an hour, and I very much doubt if the best ever get to five. In Australia, where horses are *educated* to walk, good walkers can do their six miles an hour. The Americans *educate* their horses to trot, and beat us at that pace. A good Australian walking horse will be able to keep up five miles an hour for the distance of twenty miles; and for a long distance, say a journey of two or three

hundred miles, doing from thirty to fifty miles daily, he will walk four and a-half miles an hour. In fact a bushman knows to a mile how far he has gone by consulting his watch only, for he is able to tell through experience the pace his horse is walking at, just in the same way that a jockey judges the speed of his race-horse. At all the largest horse-shows in the Australian Colonies, special prizes are given for the best walking horses.

To teach a horse to walk well is a very easy matter, only requiring patience, time, and a certain amount of knack. The reins must not be drawn up tightly, but on the contrary they must be slack, and only so drawn up as just to feel the colt's mouth and no more. A horse cannot extend himself and walk fast if he has not his head, which holds good with respect to any pace, for a horse can neither gallop, trot, or walk at his best, if his head is confined. When commencing to teach a horse to walk, the only thing to be done is to prevent him from indulging in the jig-jog; and to prevent

this every time he does so, he must be brought up to the walk again by means of pressure on the bit. No endeavour should now be made at fast walking; the only thing to be done is to make him walk in *some* style or other, and to prevent him from breaking. A man who is used to this work will *feel* the colt is going to break, or wants to do so, and so will be in readiness to prevent him, or at least prevent him breaking badly. It will take a month or more before the colt is tolerably free from breaking, but as soon as he has got to understand he is not to do so, and his breaks grow less in number, he may be taught to increase the speed of his walk by pressure of the heel or spur. You should not use a whip, for it generally causes them to break. As soon as he has recovered his break, slack the reins again and urge him to his fastest walk, which in time will be double what it was at first. The colt should not be sickened of one pace, but after walking a mile he must be trotted or cantered for half a mile, and then drawn up to the walk

again. When a colt is being taught his paces, he should not be out long; if he gets an hour of it twice daily, and is made to do his best all the time, it will be plenty for him. When he is walking he must be made to do his best, and when he gets a trot or canter to rest him from walking, he should be made to do that also in his best form. By so doing he is taught to exert himself, and to learn that he must not move in a slovenly manner, and at the same time, although the chief subject at present is to teach him to walk, he is also being initiated into the proper method of trotting and cantering. Although he will, in three or four months, be a fair walker, it will be a year, or perhaps two, before he has attained perfection. The Americans do not count months, but years, in educating a horse to trot. To get a horse at his best pace requires time, and time and patience alone can accomplish it.

The Trot.—There are three kinds of trot: the jog-trot or jig-jog, the true trot, and the flying-trot. The jog-trot is a most uncomfort-

able pace, and is not faster than a walk; the flying-trot is that indulged in by the Americans, and by our own countrymen in trotting-matches, but as the true trot is the only one used by the bulk of the people in this country, I shall confine myself to describing the method of teaching the colt the proper mode of progressing in that pace. The jog-trot is a modification of the true trot, whilst the flying-trot is an exaggeration of it; therefore the true trot is the medium, and the best for all purposes with the exception of race trotting.

To teach a colt the true trot, the reins should not be held slack as in walking, but should be well gathered up to make the animal place his hind legs well under him, and also cause him to lift his fore limbs higher, thus giving him knee action; the great beauty and comfort in the trot being free action, and as an extreme pace is not required, comfort and looks are placed in the scale against flying speed. The animal should be urged forward by voice, heel, or spur, at the same time being

kept in check by the bit; he is thus forced to expend his increased exertions in the air, or in other words, he will trot with higher action, although his speed will be little or no faster than before. He should not be trotted more than half a mile at a time, but whilst trotting must do so in his best form, and when walked between his trots, he must do that also in his best style.

What I have already said under the head of walking, with reference to the time to be occupied daily in teaching a colt his paces, applies equally to the trot and other paces, for a colt, if tired, cannot be taught his paces, and will only be spoilt if persevered with when fatigued; therefore make him do his best all the time, at whatever different paces he is put, but avoid tiring him.

The off fore-leg is the best to teach him to lead off with; but some horses go easier, and with more comfort to their riders, when leading with the near fore; therefore I do not think a rule can be laid down as to which is invariably

the best, but after having ridden the colt a little time you will soon find out which way he goes best, for I think it a pity, if he goes best with his near fore first, just for the sake of fashion, to alter it to the off fore; for although it is easy to teach him to lead with the off leg, it will never have the same easy and free motion it had when using the near, which in this particular case nature seemed to have intended for that purpose. Again, some horses will trot equally well with either leg leading. If the colt is being taught for a lady's riding, he must lead with his off fore-leg.

The Canter.—By some writers the canter is described as a thoroughly artificial pace, but why, I am unable to understand. The *true* canter is nothing more than a slow gallop, as is the gallop an extended and fast canter, the difference between the two paces being a matter of *speed*. If the style of movement of some ladies' horses which go with a sort of hop and a shuffle, which is generally termed a canter, is *the* canter alluded to by these

authors, then I acknowledge it *is* an artificial pace, and one very tiring to the animal as well as very prejudicial to his soundness, and, to my mind, very ugly to boot. If ladies must ride rocking-horses, they would be much better supplied with wooden ones, which could be kept at much less cost, requiring neither food, shoeing, nor grooming, whilst the wear and tear of the habit would be much reduced, owing to the lack of mud thrown up. Luckily we seldom see one of these hopping, shuffling brutes, which by some are supposed to be the perfection of a lady's horse.

The colt is taught to canter by urging him forward, the meanwhile restraining him with the bit. In the canter as in the trot, true action is required, and for the same reason, namely, that speed not being requisite, comfort and beauty of pace take its place, which can only be accomplished by having the hind legs well drawn under the body, and the knees well elevated and flexed. If the colt is for a gentleman to ride, I do not think it matters which

fore-leg he leads with, for, as in the trot, some animals lead better with one than the other; but if for a lady, the colt should always be taught to lead with his off fore, which is done by drawing his head a little to the near side, at the same time striking him with the whip on the same side.

The Gallop is an extension or exaggeration of the canter, the limbs not being elevated so much as in the canter, but extended to a greater extent, whilst the abdomen is brought nearer to the ground. For ordinary galloping the colt requires no teaching; only give him his head, and urge him forward fast enough, and he will gallop. For racing purposes the colt must be taught to make the most of his gallop; but as this is not a treatise on training, and as the racing colt acquires his education under the supervision of his trainer, I shall not enter further into the subject.

CHAPTER V

THE ROAD-HACK.

HIS CONFORMATION—THE LADIES' HORSE—ROTTEN ROW—THE COVERT HACK—THE HUNTER—FOR AN OPEN COUNTRY—FOR A CRAMPED COUNTRY—MADE HUNTERS—PLEASURES OF A PULLING HORSE—BREAKING IN A COLT TO HOUNDS—'CAN HE LEAP?'—NATURAL JUMPERS—ARTIFICIAL FENCES—LIFTING HORSES AT THEIR FENCES—AN INCIDENT—WATER JUMPS—HOW TO FALL WELL—HIGH-COURAGED *VERSUS* SLUGGISH HORSES—WASHING HORSES' LEGS—MUD FEVER—STOPPING HORSES' FEET—MICROSCOPIC EXPERIMENTS—ENGLISH RACERS IN AUSTRALIA AND INDIA—PARING HORSES' FEET—COLTS SHEDDING THEIR TEETH—COMPOSITION OF BONE—TWO-YEAR-OLD RACING—PRIZE-FIGHTERS—EARLY MATURITY AND EARLY DECAY—FAMOUS AMERICAN TROTTERS: TOPGALLANT, LADY BLANCHE, DUTCHMAN, AJAX, FLORA TEMPLE, LADY THORN, GOLDSMITH MAID, DEXTER, AMERICAN GIRL—RACING NOW-A-DAYS A MONEY-MAKING BUSINESS.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROAD HACK.

I WILL here give a brief description of the several classes of saddle-horses required in this country for civil purposes.

THE ROAD HACK, worked as he is on hard metal roads, cannot combine speed with durability, as the rate of fourteen to eighteen miles an hour would soon wear out his feet and legs, when he would only be fit for a tradesman's cart or cab work, therefore a horse of this sort should be a good walker, and be able to trot from eight to twelve or fourteen miles an hour, doing it with good, true, and level action, being neither too high nor too low, for with low action when he has gone some distance and begins to feel tired he will trip over stones or inequalities in the ground, and very possibly fall, and if the

action is too high he will soon batter his legs and feet to pieces. With regard to make and shape, he should be as near perfection as possible, for without perfect symmetry no pace can be at the height of excellence, but as perfect conformation is seldom met with, its nearest approach must be sought for.

The head should be small and fine, broad between the eyes and between the branches of the lower jaw at their angles, also the distance from the eye to the angle of the lower jaw should be great; the nostrils should be large, wide, clean, and well-defined; the mouth small, with the lips thin and firm; the ears should be small, fine, and pointed, being carried firmly with their tips inclining slightly towards each other; the eye should be large, full, and prominent, with well-developed arch. The neck must be long, thin, and fit well into the space formed between the branches of the lower jaw, longer on its upper than its under surface, as well as convex on its superior border. The head should be well 'set on' to the neck, which, if

the jaws are wide and the neck of the proper conformation will be the case, and add very materially to the good mouth of the horse. The withers must neither be too fine, thick, or low, whilst a fine wither well clothed with muscle, and yet not loaded, is perfection. The mane should be fine, silky, and not too abundant. The shoulder-blade must be long and oblique, not straight, neither must it be coarse, but blend gradually into the withers and back; a coarse thick shoulder should always be avoided, as also a very fine one, leaving the withers to stand up by themselves like a ploughshare, for an animal with such shoulders will soon tire, owing to insufficient muscular development of the parts. The long oblique shoulder gives plenty of space before the rider, the saddle sits well provided the girth is also deep and the action is pleasant, but if the shoulder be straight or short, or a combination of both, the saddle will be too forward, and when the horse stumbles, as he is almost sure to do from defective action due to this malconformation,

he runs the chance of falling, breaking his knees, and perhaps the neck of his rider as well. The chest should be deep and moderately broad, both being essential to the full development of the functions of the heart and lungs. The fore-arm must be long in proportion to the leg, that is, the greater length in proportion must be above the knee, and the less below it the better; the muscular development of the fore-arm should be as great as possible. The elbow long and prominent, not 'tied in,' but clear of the chest. The knee should be large, wide, and prominent, but should appear more or less flat when examined from in front; the trapezium, or bone behind the knee, should also be long and prominent. Avoid 'calf' knees, and those which are bent forward. The cannon or shank bone should be as short and strong as possible, and perfectly straight, being neither curved forwards, backwards, or laterally: the tendons at the posterior aspect of this bone should stand well out from it, which will be the case when the trapezium is well developed;

there should be a distinct line of demarcation between the tendons and the bone, but if this is filled up the leg will be more or less round instead of being broad and flat. Such legs are called 'gummy.' The fetlock joint should be large and flat laterally, its posterior aspect being well-defined and prominent. The pastern bones should neither be too long, short, oblique, or straight. If the pastern is long it is necessarily oblique, and therefore weak; if short it is upright, and the severe concussion so produced causes ringbones, windgalls, navicular disease, &c., besides causing the horse to be rough and unpleasant to ride. The pastern joint should be well developed and strong. The feet, as regards the size, make and shape, &c., of the horse should neither be too large nor too small; the walls of the foot should form at the toe an angle of about 45° with the ground; the sole should be moderately concave, the frog large and strong, and the whole hoof should be tough, sound, and not brittle. The back should be straight and not too long, a hollow back being

objectionable on account of its weakness, whilst a roach back is very strong, although a horse having a back of that conformation will be rough to ride. The ribs should be long and oval, and they should continue to be so up to the very last, and the space between the last rib and the 'hooks' should be capable of being covered by the breadth of the hand. The hind quarters must be long, deep, full, and broad, as well as straight from the back to the tail, the distance from the 'hooks' to the hocks great, the stifle prominent, and the 'second thighs' large and full. The hock should be large and fine, without being coarse or having any puffiness about it; the point of the hock prominent, and the leg below the hock incline a little under the body; it should neither be perpendicular nor deviate laterally from the perpendicular, or in other words, should not be 'wide behind' or 'cow-hocked.' Those parts below the hocks may be compared with the description of those below the knee. The tail should be carried in a straight line from the

spinal chain and then droop in a graceful curve.

The Ladies' Horse should be cast in a longer mould, or his body will be almost hidden by the habit, therefore his neck must be long, and his back longer than that of a man's hack, which will also give more elasticity to its paces. He should be perfect in conformation, paces, mouth, and temper, which if one may judge by what one sees of ladies' mounts in the Row, is very seldom found, by far the greater number being long-legged weeds or thick coarse carriage-horses, as rough as an elephant, and often very lame as well; in fact, they are horses that a man would not ride himself if he possibly could help it, but yet he considers them good enough for his sisters, daughters, or wife. It is quite a treat to see a really good lady's horse amongst the miscellaneous herd of nags to be found in the Row during the season.

The Cover Hack is a cob of from fourteen to fifteen hands high, capable of carrying his rider to the meet at the rate of about sixteen miles

an hour, and he must also be able to jump a little so as to go by short cuts if required to do so. If for a heavy weight he must be a stout cob, but for a weight under fifteen stone may be well bred, or for a light weight actually thoroughbred.

The Hunter may be quite thoroughbred, nearly thoroughbred, or half-bred. If for a light weight, say under twelve stone, and in such flying counties as Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, a thoroughbred should be ridden, provided the purse be long enough to procure one up to the weight and with the necessary qualities. A nearly thoroughbred will suit a weight of from twelve to sixteen stone, but beyond that a horse with great strength, good action, and a certain amount of breeding—in fact, a well-bred cart-horse—will be required. If the country be an open one with large enclosures, and consequently few fences, the thoroughbred will be the best horse for hunting purposes, speed being the requisite, but for a cramped country, a half-bred horse is the best, being

better qualified to get over awkward fences than the thoroughbred, who has for generations and generations been bred for flat racing, and consequently has to some extent lost the knack or power of jumping over a high fence, although he can easily defeat the half-bred over a wide jump. Moreover, the hot, fiery, and eager temper of the thoroughbred is not qualified to negotiate high, frequent, and difficult fences with calmness, and therefore accidents are more liable to happen; whilst the half-bred being of more equable temperament is not flurried to such an extent, and when in any difficulty at a fence is more likely to recover himself and carry his rider safely to the end of the run than the thoroughbred. As a rule, the thoroughbred is not good over rough ground, for although he may not actually have been trained or raced, his parents in all probability have, and of course the training-ground and race-course being smooth and level, they have had no necessity or opportunity of picking their way and regulating their steps to the ground over which they

are going; therefore every breeder of horses intended for hunting should run his young stock for a certain period on the roughest ground he can find, having a few open drains, bogs, &c., to assist in the education of the young animals over uneven, broken, and rough ground.

A hunter should be as near perfection as regards make and shape as possible, he should be eager, but at the same time his temper must be good, his mouth also should be perfect. It is easy to buy a so-called '*made hunter*' provided the purse be of sufficient elasticity to meet the demands of the vendor. As a rule, and with *very* few exceptions, this 'made hunter' is a good leaper, has a hard mouth, and when in view of a fence clenches his bit in his mouth, and rushes at it at the speed of twenty miles an hour. I should like to know what *pleasure* can be derived by riding such a brute as above described. It takes all a man can do to moderate the animal's pace, it requires two hands on the reins to turn

him from side to side, and the rider has the pleasant prospect in the event of a mistake at a fence, of his horse not being able to recover himself, the almost inevitable 'spill' being the result. Besides, his mount requiring all his attention, he is thus unable to enjoy the hunting, that is to say, he is unable to watch the working of the hounds, and thus his day's hunting (so called) is nothing more than a modified steeplechase with none of its accompanying pleasures.

To have a good hunter the best way is to break him in yourself, provided you are competent to do so, having a good seat, good hands, patience, pluck, and above all a liking for the work.

I will suppose you have a three-year-old, broken to road work, and that you wish to break him to hounds. The best way to do so will be to ride him to the meets as often as possible, and when he has got accustomed to the excitement of being amongst a crowd of horsemen in gay-coloured coats, the foot-people

and the hounds, you may allow him a longer 'interview' with them by following them to the covert. Harriers are the best for this purpose, owing to 'puss' as a rule running in a circle, where you have the opportunity of showing your colt everything, without 'taking it out of him.' Besides, the pace being so moderate you can always get some one to give you a lead over a small fence or two, in fact you are teaching your colt to become used to the crush, excitement, &c., and at the same time giving him a few easy lessons in leaping.

'Can he leap?' is a common question amongst 'horsey' men when alluding to a colt. My answer to this is that *any* colt will jump if in good hands, and provided he has not already been made a fool of by some greater fool than himself. Whether it be a thoroughbred, half-bred, or cart colt, he will *naturally* jump if he has not been previously messed about with. I do not say they will all leap an equal height or an equal width, but that they will do so to the best of their abilities. I have frequently

leaped colts over fences in cool blood within a week or fortnight after having first mounted them, and never met with a refusal. I do not mean to say that it is good practice to do so so early, but merely mention the fact. When you first begin to follow hounds with your colt, do not stay with them more than an hour, and if they are running fast leave them before that time has expired, for your object at present is not to gallop after hounds, but to accustom your animal to the bustle and excitement connected with hunting. With a three-year-old no galloping should be done, but if the hounds after the first draw go away, and you think it probable the fox will return to that covert, or to one near it, you may 'potter' about a little in the hopes of falling in with them again, but you must be sure to take your colt home before he is tired, for the excitement will carry him through for a time, but on reaching home he may be quite done up, refuse his food, and be anything but A 1 for two or three days. All a three-year-old should do, is to go to the meet

and trot about with the hounds till they find, and if there is a probable chance of them circling about for a time, as when in a big wood, he may still be kept moving. But when hounds commence to run, the colt should be turned homewards and ridden quietly so as to get him settled down if possible before reaching his stables; he should then be roughly groomed and left to himself with a feed of corn for a time, before his final polish up.

A four-year-old may be allowed to follow the hounds when running for a short distance, but at the first check should be ridden home quietly, and if the run is very fast he should be eased off, and when the field is out of sight turned homewards.

A five-year-old may do a little more, but must not be ridden in a long or fast run, neither must he be out with the hounds more than three hours, for he is still a *baby*, having only just shed his milk teeth, and donned his permanent ones. Every hunting man knows

that a horse is not fit to go through a run until he is six years old.

By the preceding remarks it will be seen that unless a man can forego the excitement of the chase he is not capable of breaking-in a colt with the ultimate view of making him a hunter.

To teach the colt to leap, the best way is to take him over small fences every now and then with hounds; but it will be as well to give him lessons in cold blood also, and for that purpose a few artificial fences may be put up in a field, care being taken to vary them. Thus, you may have a plain hedge, a hedge with a ditch on one side of it, and another with a ditch on both sides; some hurdles, and a plain but low post and rail fence. These fences should not be high, three feet six inches to four feet being quite high enough; the hurdles and post and rails should be firmly fixed, otherwise the colt will soon find out that they are easily knocked down, and then will not even try to clear them. A fall or two over timber

at the commencement will soon teach the animal that the fences cannot be thrown down, but that to elude a 'spill' they must be cleared properly. The colt should be ridden very quietly at his fences, his head should be tolerably slack, and every endeavour on the part of the rider should be brought into play to get the young animal to fence as quietly as he would canter over a field; by these means rushing at fences is overcome, or rather not taught, and in the event of a slip or fall the animal has a good chance of recovering himself, having the free use of his head and the pace being moderate. One constantly hears of such and such a rider being very good, owing to his being able to *lift* his horse at his fences. Can a man *lift* a horse when he is on his back? Could a man—booted and spurred if you like—seated across a form or chair with his feet off the ground, *lift* it? It is a perfect impossibility for a man to lift his horse at a fence, and those people who are in the habit of using this expression evidently do not think of what they

are saying. What they really do mean is, that the rider draws his horse on to his haunches at his fence and then, with whip or spur, sends him over. This is all very well—but, for all that, is bad horsemanship—at an easy, clean fence; but if the leap should be an awkward one, with the taking off or landing (or perhaps both) bad, a horse so ridden would be sure to fall short of his leap, and, through his head being too much confined, when he does come to grief he is unable to help himself. Therefore, make it a rule to give your horse his head and allow him to take his leaps as he thinks best, for depend upon it his instinct will teach him what is required far better than you can. I have seen many a fall in the hunting-field through no fault whatever of the horse, but owing to the meddling of his rider who imagined he was able to lift or assist him. When a horse has over-jumped himself or is in danger of losing his balance, if you pull at the bit it disconcerts him, draws his attention away from his danger, and down he goes as a rule. I

will here relate a case in point. The hounds were running when a very high bank stopped the field, who, one by one, were getting through a gap in the fence, when a horseman, being impatient of waiting his turn, backed his horse a few paces and rode him quietly at the bank which was over six feet high. The horse (a four-year-old) landed on the top, but owing to its height wavered, and seemed inclined to fall either backwards or forwards. The rider, with great tact, sat motionless, and allowed the colt the free use of his head, when he soon recovered his balance, and jumping down on the opposite side landed in safety and joined the hunt. Now, supposing an ordinary rider had been in this predicament on the top of the bank, he would have handled the reins and thus either pulled the animal back on the top of him or else have fallen on the opposite side; in either case there would have been broken bones, if not loss of life. There is one exception to allowing a colt to take his leaps as he thinks best, and that is when going over water

or over a fence with a wide ditch on one side or a ditch on both sides. When a wide-jump has to be negotiated, the colt must be sent full speed at it, so as to cover it in his stride, being the opposite to high jumping; for the higher the fence the slower should the horse be ridden at it. I was riding a colt to hounds once, when a watercourse came in our way; it was not a wide one, being only about twelve feet across, but it was six or eight feet deep with bricked sides and having very little water at the bottom of it, altogether forming an ugly jump for a young one who had never been over water before. I sent him at it at a good pace, but feeling he wavered on nearing it I swerved him round and put him at it again, when he again slackened speed, and knowing that he would not refuse I allowed him to do as he liked. He looked down at the bottom of it for a second or so, and then gathering himself together leaped over it standing, but fell on the opposite bank with his hind fetlocks hanging over the bank; another three or four inches

would have cleared it, but he fell so collectedly that he did not unseat me although I had to dismount to allow him to regain his feet. I always considered this a good lesson, for the colt afterwards, whenever nearing a water-jump, increased his speed of his own accord, having evidently learnt that water could not be crossed standing. Depend upon it, the less you try to *teach* a colt to go across country the better, for he can do it much better than you can teach him, provided you only leave him alone.

In teaching a colt over artificial fences, great care must be taken not to sicken him of his work, but every endeavour should be made to get him to be fond and eager to jump; therefore, if he is ridden once backwards and forwards over the fences three times a week it will be quite sufficient. In the meantime you may give him a leap or two out of one field into another, or take him out with the hounds for a short distance.

A perfect leaper is one who takes his fences

as a matter of course, just as he would canter from furrow to furrow over a field; nothing can be worse than a horse who, on seeing a fence before him, rushes at it *nolens volens*; as, owing to the impetus thus gained, if he makes a mistake it is very difficult for him to recover himself. Therefore, take every precaution to teach your colt to leap quietly and without any fuss.

When a horse is required to hunt in a bank country, it is a very common practice to attach a cavasson to his bridle and lead him over a few of these fences, but I do not consider this good practice, or indeed for any kind of leaping. For if he is taken over small banks at first he will learn the use of his legs, which in reality is the object required, and if he should by chance fall, the pace being so slow and the height so insignificant, the rider, if he be competent to break-in a colt at all, will not hurt himself: for a *good* rider ought to know how to *fall well* as well as how to ride well. When you fall try to retain the reins in your

hand, but if you see that by so doing you run the danger of the animal rolling over or striking you, you must let them loose, and if you are quickly on your legs again you may regain them before the horse has recovered himself; but if not, it is far better to have a run to catch your steed than undergo the chance of being crushed or maimed by him.

High-couraged generous horses are apt to go faster and do more work than they should; therefore they should be kept in check, or their eagerness to do their work will not keep pace with their strength and endurance. On the contrary, sluggish animals require a great deal of work to make them fit to gallop, and they also must be roused up from time to time.

Although I feel it is not within the province of this little volume, I wish to draw the attention of my readers to the malpractice of washing horses' legs and feet, and also of 'stopping' the feet. When washing horses' legs you are almost sure not to dry them thoroughly, thereby inducing cracked heels and the so-called 'mud fever;'

but if on the return of the animal to his stable the worst of the mud is brushed off with a stiff brush, and when dry well brushed again, the increased circulation so produced will excite a healthy action of the skin and prevent all disease. Horses' feet can very well be cleansed by means of a pick and a cloth without resorting to water, which being absorbed by capillary attraction into the horn-fibres, causes them to dilate; and thus the horn-substance, instead of being hard and compact, is rendered soft and spongy. Again, horses' feet should not be 'stopped,' nor should they be suffered to stand in their excretions, for the ammonia given off from the dung and urine dilates to a great extent the horn-fibres, thus causing the horn to be so soft that 'thrush' is the consequent disease. I have lately made microscopic experiments on the healthy horn, the horn soaked with water, and that with ammonia and water, and found the fibres in the horny sole soaked in water to be twice the size of the natural or healthy horn, whilst that in contact with am-

monia showed the fibres to be three times the size of those in healthy horn. English racers in Australia are allowed seven pounds because their feet are unable to withstand the hard ground; and, for the same reason, English horses are useless for racing purposes in India. Shoes are nailed to horses' feet for the very reason that nature did not make them *hard* enough to stand work on metal roads, therefore why do people put stopping into their horses' feet to make them softer, thus counteracting to a certain extent the benefit derived from the shoes? Surely if people *desire* soft feet there is rain enough in this country, puddles enough on the roads, and surface water *ad libitum* on the fields, to effect their purpose without resorting to such a filthy, beastly thing as cowdung. Horses' feet get so soaked with water during their work or exercise, that the aim of every horse owner should be to *keep them as dry as possible* when in the stable, instead of doing their best to make them rotten and diseased. Horses in dry climates, such as India and

Australia, have very hard feet because they are never wet, and for this reason are seldom shod except when used for work on metal roads; but when in the rainy season they get soft they are obliged to be shod, because their feet are *not hard enough.*

Paring horses' feet is also a very bad practice. Nature meant the sole to be strong, but when pared it becomes weak, unable to withstand hard substances, and thus gets bruised and subject to corns &c. The knife should, in all cases, be kept off the feet, the rasp being the best instrument with which to shorten the walls, and it is also perfectly able to remove all exfoliated horn from the sole. Is there any sense in paring an animal's feet, and then having to put on leather soles to protect them?

Hunters should not be put to full work until six years of age, for their bones and tendons are unable to stand the continued strain. Until colts have attained their fifth year, they are shedding their milk teeth and cutting others; consequently their mouths are

broken, sore, and the system more or less fevered. Owing to the soreness and tenderness of the animal's mouth, he is unable to feed well, and thus cannot be got into proper condition; besides the colt cannot stand the wear and tear on account of his bones not being *formed*, they having more cartilaginous than osseous material in their formation. The adult horse, that is, one that has a full mouth, has $\frac{2}{3}$ of osseous to $\frac{1}{3}$ of cartilaginous material entering into the composition of his bones, whilst the two-year-old has about half of each; therefore the cartilage predominating over the required quantity of osseous material causes the bones to be soft and unable to withstand the shocks of early work. Some owners of race-horses run their two-year-olds to *find out their weak points*. In cases where weak points are observable at that age, if raced, they are sure to develop, and thus cripple the colt perhaps for life, whilst if he had been allowed to lay by until of a maturer age, in all probability this weakness would have disappeared. Again,

if a sound colt be trained and raced when two years of age, it is ten to one that his tendons and bones are not able to stand the work, but that in all probability he will get sore shins, splints, or perhaps some worse disease of the legs or feet.

A horse is not able to undergo regular hunting until he is six years old, and even then he should not be worked hard. I think all our own countrymen know this, although they do not always bring it into practice. The Americans know it and profit by it. A growing colt does not make internal fat as does the adult, therefore the system not having attained firmness, cannot bear the scraping and sweating necessary to get him into condition for the hunting-field or for the racecourse. If the fat is taken off a colt, his muscular development is interfered with. In the same way prize-fighters cannot stay if trained too young, instances of which are found in Aaron Jones and M'Cormick, who, although they felt well and fit, were unable to last. Colts are forced to

early maturity and worked hard when they ought to be in the nursery, the result being that they are unable to last any time, but become useless (except for stud purposes) before they have attained horsehood. Early maturity means early decay.

The Americans break in their trotters, as a rule, at three years of age. They then give them ordinary road work, in the mean time gradually teaching them to trot in form by giving them occasionally a spurt for a quarter of a mile or so. But they do not usually race them until they are from five to seven years old; in fact, they do not consider a horse to be at his best until he is from seven to nine years of age.

I will now give a few instances of famous American trotters, who lasted well through not having been worked too young. Topgallant was foaled in 1808; when in his sixteenth year, in 1823, he trotted twelve miles, in harness, in 38 m. In 1829, when in his twenty-second year, he trotted four heats of four

miles, against Whalebone, and won, his fastest time being 11 m. 4 s. In 1831, when in his twenty-fourth year, he trotted a race of three-mile heats, which was won in four heats, Top-gallant winning the second and running second in the deciding heat. A week afterwards he won a race for three-mile heats.

Lady Blanche was foaled in 1829. She first trotted a match in 1835, and when twenty-four years old she won a race of four heats. In 1855 she died, during her training.

Dutchman was foaled in 1828, and when five years of age was drawing bricks in a team. In 1836, when eight years old, he trotted, to saddle, four miles in 10 m. 51 s. On August 1, 1839, when eleven years of age, he trotted, to saddle, three miles in 7 m. 32½ s. In 1838, when ten years old, he trotted Rattler for three-mile heats, winning two out of three and the race. In 1846, when eighteen years old, Dutchman won another race, but died in the following year.

Ajax, foaled in 1832, when sixteen years

of age was matched to trot a mare for twelve miles, and won.

Flora Temple was foaled in 1845, was broken-in when five years old, and raced the same year. In 1859 she trotted two-mile heats against Princess, and won in two heats, the fastest being in 4 m. 50½ s., when fourteen years of age. In 1860, when fifteen years old, she trotted three miles in 7 m. 33¾ s. She ran in 1861, since which date I have had no opportunity of finding any record of her running.

Lady Thorn was foaled in 1856; she first trotted in 1864, when eight years old, and remained upon the turf until the latter end of 1870, when she got injured through an accident. Her best one-mile time was accomplished in 1869, for four heats, against Goldsmith Maid, American Girl, &c. She won three out of the four heats, her fastest time being 2 m. 18¼ s.

Goldsmith Maid was foaled in 1857, and ran wild until she was eight years old. In 1865 she ran her first race. On September 2,

1874, when seventeen years of age, she trotted the fastest mile on record, namely, in 2 m. 14 s. Whether her time has since been beaten or not I am unable to state. She is still on the trotting turf.

Dexter was foaled in 1858, was not broken-in until he was four years old, and until then had never eaten grain of any kind. He did not trot a race until he was six years old, and was king of the trotting track until 1868, since which date I have no record of him. In 1867, when nine years old, he trotted one mile in 2 m. 17¼ s., and in the same year he won two heats against Lady Thorn, for two mile heats, the fastest of which was done in 4 m. 51 s.

American Girl was foaled in 1862. She appeared on the track in 1867; and I find she was still running in 1874, when twelve years old, and in that year did a mile in 2 m. 16¾ s., and in all probability she is still trotting.

Dexter never trotted until he was six years old; Dutchman never trotted until he was six,

and underwent no training until he was seven years of age; Goldsmith Maid and Lady Thorn were eight years old before they were introduced to the trotting track.

Now having enumerated these *facts* (taken from the celebrities of the American trotting turf), which apply equally to hunting as to racing, may I ask, is it common sense to gallop a colt when a yearling, to train and race him as a two-year-old, and get him screwed and useless except for breeding purposes when he is three or four years old, thus doing away with a long course of excellence and utility? How many colts ever see a race-course after they are three or four years old, whilst those that are able to gallop at five or six years of age are looked upon as wonders? Look at such horses as Flying Childers, Eclipse, Matchem, Goldfinder, Gimcrack, Pot-8-os, Bay Malton, Glencoe, Bay Middleton, St. Albans, Blair Athol, Favonius, &c. &c., who never ran as two-year-olds. Again, look at Macgregor, who won the 2,000 guineas in 1870; and Doncaster, who

won the Derby and came in second for the St. Leger in 1873, won the Goodwood Cup in 1874, and the Ascot Cup and Alexandra Plate in 1875, and was sold for 14,000*l.*, the highest price ever paid for a stud horse; both these horses never ran as two-year-olds.

On the other hand, look at The Rake, Lady Elizabeth, Queen's Messenger, Pall Mall, Almoner, Sir William Wallace, and a host of other horses, who were not able to stand the shocks of training. Kingcraft, although he won the Derby in 1870, came out badly afterwards, which is generally attributed to his having run so much as a two-year-old, plainly showing that however great his speed was, he was unable to withstand early training, and thus a good horse was spoilt.

We first begin to train them as yearlings, and run them so much as two-year-olds that many become roarers, like Prince Charlie, Belladrum, and Liddington; or rupture their suspensory ligaments, like Student, Crucifix, and Dundee; rupture blood-vessels, like The

Rake, Hermit, and Atlantic; whilst others fall down dead whilst at exercise, like Orinoco and Aquilo.

Racing now-a-days is a money-making business, carried on under the cloak of improving the breed of our horses, which in reality is quite a secondary consideration, money-making being the chief object. I do not say this out of spite, for I am very much attached to racing: in fact it is, in my opinion, the sport *par excellence* of all others. But I must own I should like to see more attention paid to the improvement of stock than to the accumulation of the almighty dollar. So long as we run two-year-olds, so long will the stamina of our horses diminish, and our two-year-olds run a few times and, as a rule, disappear for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKING TO HARNESS.

DOUBLE *VERSUS* SINGLE HARNESS—FOUR WHEELS *VERSUS* TWO—BREAKING TO DOUBLE HARNESS—BREAKING TO SINGLE HARNESS—BREAKING THE CART COLT TO HARNESS—BLINKERS—LADIES' EYES.

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKING TO HARNESS.

BREAKING TO HARNESS may be divided into two sections, one for the well-bred horse and the other for the cart-horse.

The well-bred horse first requires to be well broken to the saddle and well mouthed, for most carriage-horses are used for saddle purposes as well as for driving, many gentlemen and *ladies* also riding their carriage-horses, whilst some hunt them as well; anyhow, the groom rides them at exercise, so they must be able to carry as well as draw. The cart-horse, being of a duller temperament, does not require so much previous breaking-in before being put in harness, and a great many which have never been first broken to the saddle will take no

notice whatever if a man jumps on their backs and rides them; but it is always best to break them in a little to riding at first, as a good mouth is in that way best obtained.

When breaking-in a well-bred horse to harness, that is to say, one whose pace will be the trot and not the slow drudgery of the farm or cart-horse, he must previously have been well mouthed and broken to the saddle, before a set of harness is placed on him. Allow him to smell and look at every article of harness well before you endeavour to put it on him. Be very quiet, and take plenty of time. After having let him inspect the collar, place it gently over his head. Some men prefer a collar open at the withers, which can be slipped over the neck and fastened with a buckle, but these stretch very much, do not sit firmly, but 'waddle,' and thus cause sore shoulders to an animal which is not accustomed to harness work, and whose shoulders consequently are not hardened. For the first day or two it is as well to put on a collar which is too big for him, and when he

is actually to be put to, it may be exchanged for one of the proper dimensions. By this means a colt will not become alarmed, for the large collar slipping easily over his head, he becomes used to the action by the time he is required to don his own. The pad, crupper, and breeching must now be placed on his back, the tail elevated, and the crupper (with a buckle on its side) slipped under it, care being taken that no hairs are enclosed by it; then the crupper is buckled up, the pad adjusted, and the girth drawn up. It is as well on the first day of harnessing the colt to omit putting on the hames and traces, for they would only knock about and alarm him, but if you decide on putting them on, the traces must be drawn out horizontally and firmly attached to the breeching by means of straps or cording. It is good practice to connect the collar at the withers loosely with the pad by means of a strap, to prevent the collar from slipping forward to the ears when the animal's head is lowered. A common riding bridle should then be placed on

the head, and the colt led about for an hour. By using a common riding bridle the colt is enabled to see everything on his back, and thus when any part of the harness strikes him he is able to see it, and soon getting to understand the cause, takes no further notice of it. But when a bridle with blinkers is put on, and at every step he takes the harness strikes him, he *then* does not know the cause, and thus becoming terrified, it requires some time and patience to calm him. After he has been led out for about an hour, a driving bridle with blinkers may be placed on his head in lieu of the riding bridle, and then he must be led about again for twenty minutes or half-an-hour, when he should be returned to his stables and the harness removed. You may repeat this for a short time in the afternoon. On the following day he must be harnessed again, but with the addition of the hames and traces, and led about with a riding bridle, which, after a time may be exchanged for one with blinkers, the same being repeated in the afternoon. Of course a

very quiet-tempered colt will get used to the harness in much less time, in fact some take no notice of it at all; but with a high-spirited or nervous animal, every precaution should be taken, and plenty of time spent over the process.

The colt is now ready for putting to.

Some people advocate breaking-in a colt to double harness in a break first, whilst others recommend putting him between the shafts at once. Undoubtedly when a break can be secured, it is both safest and best for this purpose. As to single harness, some people prefer four wheels to two, their theory being that in a four-wheeled trap there is no weight on the animal's back, whilst in the two-wheel there is. If this were the only evidence for or against four wheels *versus* two, their theory would be inevitable, but unfortunately for them, the four wheels have great drawbacks which counteract the benefit incurred by placing no weight on the animal's back, for if the colt is restive and backs, the hind wheels run out at

right angles to the horse and driver, rendering the vehicle uncontrollable and highly dangerous; and also when rounding sharp corners, or in turning, the colt not being as yet handy, the hind wheels are very likely to be caught against some obstruction, and thus possibly overturn the conveyance. Again, during the act of turning, the hind wheels may become locked against the fore ones. For breaking to single harness, the two-wheeler is most certainly the best and safest, for when rounding a sharp turn, you know exactly where you are, and have not got to watch any hind wheels, thus taking your attention from the colt, which, as a rule, requires all you can give him; he can also back to his heart's content without much danger, or at least without one fiftieth part of that incurred with a four-wheeled vehicle.

For breaking to double harness, an old horse is required which is free from vice, and well trained to start immediately the word is given, and to stand perfectly still when required. The break having been placed with the pole

pointing in the direction in which you intend going, the break-horse is put to on the near side, and the colt (which should have a halter on as well as his bridle, the shank end being tied to the tracebearers) led out. The colt is then loosely buckled to the pole-piece, after which the trace nearest the pole is passed over the roller bolt, the animal's quarters are then gently forced towards the pole, the outside trace attached, and the pole-piece adjusted to the requisite length, then the reins are crossed and buckled, and the driver, taking their ends, mounts the box, the old horse receives the word of command, and the pair start without any effort on the part of the young animal. If all this is done quietly, quickly, but without any fuss, the colt will be put to before he knows where he is. At starting, and for a little way along the road, a man (commonly called the breaksman) should keep beside the colt about opposite his shoulder, so that at any moment he can place his hand upon the halter shank, and be ready to assist the driver, if required;

but as soon as it is evident that the colt is inclined to go quietly, the breaksman may mount the stand behind the box, and stand there, but must be ready at a second's notice to jump down when his services are thought to be needed. The break should not be out above an hour, or the colt will be liable to get sore shoulders, but must be driven about slowly, and when required to turn round, the breaksman must help him by pulling the halter towards himself, whilst the driver turns the old horse in a wide circle. During the drive the horses should be stopped and started again several times, that the colt may get a few lessons. For the first few days driving either up or down steep hills must be avoided, but the work should consist in driving quietly about roads, teaching the colt to turn round, and also turn sharp angles into another road &c. A few days of this kind of work will enable him to be driven anywhere, such as in crowded streets &c., but it will not do to take him into any crush, for as yet he cannot be depended

upon, and might show fight, which, owing to the crowd, might not be successfully baffled. It is a good plan from the commencement of putting to the colt, on his return to the stable to bathe his shoulders, whether they appear tender or not, with a cooling astringent, such as the lead lotion, for it often happens that, although you cannot see or feel anything amiss, they in reality are slightly tender, and on the following day he objects to the collar. Many a horse has been made a 'jibber' for life through the want of this precaution. When the colt has become tolerably handy in the break, he may be put between the shafts, which in all its material points will be the same as that described below.

In breaking a colt to single harness, he must first have a couple of days' tuition to get him used to his harness, as before mentioned under the head of breaking-in to double harness. The harness is best when so constructed that the tugs open from above, allowing the shafts to drop into them, and every man who is

in the habit of breaking young horses to single harness should have a set so made. It is not difficult to place the shafts quietly through the ordinary tugs, but when the horse is being loosed they are very apt to strike the animal and frighten him; thus in many instances teaching him, to his dying day, to *rush* out of the shafts. The two-wheeled break should be strong and high on the wheels, that the splinter-bar may be high, and so prevent the animal kicking over it, should he be so inclined. The colt, wearing a halter besides his bridle, is brought out, the shafts placed gently in the tugs, and the harness fastened in the ordinary manner, as well as a kicking-strap over his quarters buckled to the shafts. The driver now mounts to his seat with the reins, whilst a man at the colt's head pats and coaxes him forwards, when, on feeling himself confined between the shafts, he will probably plunge, rear, or possibly kick. But whatever he does, he must be reassured and calmed by kindness, the man at his head giving him such little

assistance as he is enabled to, such as pushing against the shaft or pulling it towards himself, according to circumstances; he must also run alongside of him for some time, but when the animal settles down and gets warmed to his work, he may either jump into the break or stand on the step; in either case he must be in readiness to leap down and help when required. The colt should not be driven more than an hour, and when required to turn the man must seize the halter and draw the colt round towards himself, at the same time pulling the shaft on that side towards himself; this must be continued for some days, until the colt has learnt to push against the shaft himself. Of course, when the animal is turned on the opposite side, the assistance must be on that side also.

If the colt jibs, it is best to sit still and coax him a little, and when he is tired of standing he will move on; but there are some animals which will not do so, and then it must rest with the judgment of the driver, with his knowledge of the colt's temper, whether he use

the whip and risk a kick or two, and perhaps a rear, or not. A colt being broken to single harness should not be driven down anything like a steep hill until he is handy at other things, for this is the most difficult lesson of all for him to learn, as he then has the full weight of the vehicle pushing against him, and it takes a long time before he will learn to keep himself straight in the breeching, but will push sideways and run into the opposite bank, if the man at his head does not take care and help him.

The bit I prefer to all others when breaking a colt to single harness is the smooth ring snaffle, with the reins passed through both rings on either side, thus converting it into an ordinary snaffle; but if you buckle them to the separate ring on either side, the bit becomes too severe, pinches the jaw, and causes so much pain that the animal fights with it, and becoming restive, pays no attention to what you wish to teach him.

BREAKING THE CART COLT TO HARNESS requires a very different method of operation to that used

for the purpose with the lighter breeds. Some farmers put them in a team at the plough as soon as they have been taught to lead; but I do not consider this happy-go-lucky style at all a good one. They are not likely to have good mouths, and the heavy strain of this continual dead pulling work makes them slow, is inclined to make them downhearted, and whether they work in the furrow or on the surface, it causes them to move unequally with their fellow, and so is very apt to make them jerky in their style of going; and moreover, being young, with their bones and tendons undeveloped, they are very liable to 'shoulder slip,' as it is commonly called.

The colt should be led about the roads with the breaking-in tackling on, as stated in Chapter II., until he is used to passing objects, vehicles, &c. He should also be driven in reins, and then ridden a few times. After he has got tolerably quiet at this kind of work, some cart harness may be put on him, and he is then to be led or driven about for a couple

of days without blinkers, after which he may be driven, with the addition of a cart bridle, with blinkers, when he will be ready for a few lessons in pulling. Three or four rails or planks should be tied together, and attached by chains to the harness, of course having a stretcher or cross-bar between them. The colt is then to be led about a field with them, and after he is found to drag them tolerably quietly he should be driven instead of being led. You may keep him at this work for an hour, after which he must be unharnessed, and his shoulders bathed with an astringent cooling lotion. This should be repeated on the following day, and after that the weight of rails or timber may be gradually increased; of course this hour's work daily is not sufficient, so besides this he may be driven about the roads in his harness for an hour or two as well, or ridden. When he has drawn light loads of timber for a week, he should be harnessed to an empty cart and taken on to a road; he may be taken two or three miles—of course at a walk—and then

turned. When on his homeward journey he may be stopped and started again occasionally, as well as being turned round every now and then. A week of this work will make him tolerably handy, and then he should be taught to back the empty cart; after having learnt which he may be made to draw small loads, and so commence to earn his living. It is a great mistake to put cart colts to draw heavy loads at first, for they are much more liable to jib if not properly broken-in than well-bred ones; and when once a cart colt has jibbed it is the most difficult thing in the world to cure him of that propensity.

As far as I am concerned I much prefer breaking-in colts, whether for heavy or light draught, without blinkers, for it is much easier and safer done. Who has not seen a horse perfectly quiet to ride but having a nervous temperament, put in harness, half-blinded by the blinkers, carrying his ears erect but continually keeping them in motion, turning them forwards, backwards, and to the side in quick

succession, his eyes having a frightened, scared expression, whilst his whole body indicates fear of something not understood? Put that same horse in harness *without* blinkers, thus allowing him to see what is going on, and he will be perfectly quiet and happy.

During the year 1874 light carts were debited with 572 casualties, including both killed and wounded, in London alone; whilst in 1875 the number was 741, being an increase of 169. The police report that reckless driving is on the decrease. This great discrepancy in killed and wounded during the years 1874 and 1875 is chiefly owing to the fact that tradesmen's carts are left standing in the streets whilst the drivers are delivering their masters' goods. The horses remain still so long as there is nothing to disturb their equanimity, but should a regimental band, a fire-engine, &c., pass by, away they go on their headlong career until some passing wheel or lamp-post overthrows them. Now, if these horses were accustomed to go without blinkers and allowed to have the

free use of their eyes as nature intended them, they would in nine cases out of ten not run away. If some object suddenly fell with a crash near them they would certainly start and move a few paces (and so would you), but having the free use of their eyes they would soon see the cause of their fright, and then understanding that no harm was intended them would become still again. Again, if a band or fire-engine is coming towards them, either from in front or from behind, they are enabled to see it, scrutinise it, and become acquainted with its nature before it nears them; but if the animal wears blinkers he hears a noise, elevates his head, moves his ears in all directions (for being unable to see he makes as much use of his sense of hearing as possible), becomes fidgety, and when the object of his fears *suddenly* comes within range of his diminished vision, he is very naturally terrified, and the consequence is that he runs away to avoid it. I am certain that if horses were driven without blinkers such accidents caused by running away would be

greatly diminished; it is only *fashion*, that bugbear of society, that causes blinkers to be an inseparable part of harness. I am sure a horse looks better without them if people would only accustom themselves to the sight. Why hide a horse's eyes, the most expressive feature in his head? What would a lady be if her eyes were put out or hidden from view, and unable to use them as some know only too well how to do.

In concluding this chapter let me remind my readers that bearing-reins are both useless and cruel, the former because the horse cannot pull to the full extent of his power when his head is stuck up in the air, and that all attempts to alter the natural conformation of his head and neck are futile; the latter because the head and neck being kept in an unnatural and constrained position causes the animal excessive pain.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAROUCHE, LANDAU, AND BROUGHAM HORSE.

THE VICTORIA, T-CART, LIGHT WAGGONETTE, OR DOG-CART HORSE—THE OMNIBUS AND VAN HORSE—THE CART-HORSE—THE LINCOLNSHIRE DRAY-HORSE—THE SUFFOLK PUNCH—THE CLYDESDALE—SCOTCH BREEDERS.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAROUCHE, LANDAU, AND BROUGHAM HORSE.

The barouche is always drawn by a pair of horses; the landau and brougham are also pair-horse carriages, except when especially built for single harness. I shall first suppose all three of these carriages are intended to be drawn by pairs of horses. The horses required for this work are chiefly bred in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Shropshire, being, as a rule, a cross between cart-mares—especially if of the Cleveland breed, now rarely met with—and the thoroughbred horse. A good horse of this sort should be lengthy, and yet have a tolerably short back; should have oblique and muscular shoulders, long, straight, and strong

quarters, besides having good knee and hock action; the head should be neat, and the neck gracefully curved and well set on. He should be deep in the girth, have a good round barrel well ribbed up, and should not be less than 16 hands high. For single harness, in a landau or brougham, the horse must have all the above points, but must besides be a heavier and larger built animal; in height he must not be less than 16 hands, nor much above that standard, for a horse which stands 16 hands 3 inches, or 17 hands high, is generally long-legged, long-backed, and weak in comparison to his height.

For the Victoria, T-cart, light Waggonette, Phaeton, or Dog-cart, a better bred horse is required; he may be nearly or quite thoroughbred, but must be of good conformation, and have good and moderately high action; in height he may be 15 hands 3 inches, or 16 hands. Norfolk supplies the best horses for this kind of work, they being strong, handsome animals, high-actioned, and fast trotters, as far as fast

trotting and high action are compatible with speed.

THE OMNIBUS AND VAN-HORSE is rather a nondescript sort of animal, being something between a carriage-horse and that used for heavy draught. There is no distinct breed of this class of horse; but a great many of our omnibus-horses come from abroad, especially from Normandy, whilst the van-horses are chiefly chance gets, picked up here and there wherever found. Colts got by a carthorse out of a half-bred mare are very apt to develop into van-horses. An omnibus-horse should be capable of drawing a heavy load at a speed of about 8 miles an hour, whilst a van-horse should do about 6 miles in the same time.

THE CART-HORSE.—The Lincolnshire dray-horse is a large and magnificent animal, being the produce of a cross between the old English black and the Flemish horse, but being very slow, he has for some time been superseded by the Suffolk and Clydesdale horses. In his day he was in great request for brewers' drays, but

owing to his want of speed he has now been almost discarded. The Lincolnshire dray-horse is now used for the production of carriage-horses by thoroughbred sires, and also some breeders of Clydesdale horses in Scotland are rather fond of crossing them with the Clydesdale, and selling the produce as thoroughbred Clydesdales, thus realising a thoroughbred price for a crossbred animal.

The Suffolk Cart-horse is chestnut, varying from a sorrel to a moderately dark chestnut colour; he is rather long in the back, deep-chested, full in the flank, and deep-bellied, having clean and wiry legs and a full crest. He is often seen in the South of England, but the Clydesdale is fast superseding him. Taking into consideration his make and shape, I do not see why the mares should not produce good carriage-horses, if mated with suitable thoroughbred sires.

The Clydesdale certainly is at present the king of the cart-horses in Great Britain; he is generally of a bay, brown, or black colour, the

bay and brown predominating. He has a neat well-bred head, a good neck, deep girth and round middlepiece, is short in the leg, the bone of which is remarkably large, and the fetlock covered with long hair. Much fashion depends upon the growth of hair at the fetlock; formerly it was curly, but now a Clydesdale will not pass muster unless he has about six inches of quite straight hair on these parts. Great prices are given for these horses, even when yearlings; when thoroughbred or *supposed* to be so, some good sires being let for the season at 500*l*. In Scotland they are all the rage, great care being taken with their breeding, although occasionally a breeder does sell a crossbred one as a thoroughbred, thus putting a nice little sum into his pocket.

NOTE.—Since the above was written, a Clydesdale Society has been formed, and a Clydesdale Stud Book is being compiled.

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